ACROSS ROAD 56
or...THE APPLES of THEIR EYES

There, across from where my Mama was born and played as a child... across from the scene of the celebrated "pig-sty" incident...lay on of the landmarks of the Concord Township..the celebrated, NEAR MILE LONG expanse of Leichty-Widney Orchards, running from "Dick Crow's Corner" to the "Pickle Factory Corner"! I personal never saw them in anything like their full splendor..Oh, my mother and I did visit the Leichty end of the operation once for apples, and a time or two after that when its buildings housed a slaughter house and meat market...but I never saw the full 4,000 feet of apple trees.

Now, if you travel that section of the "Pickle Factory Road", you see the fields of beans and corn and perhaps alfalfa...whatever will yield the best and **WILL REQUIRE LESS LABOR than the well run orchard!**

But, there was the time when the entire county, and far more than that, drove to those orchards in the autumn to sample and buy the Grimes goldens, the Stayman's winsaps, the pippins, the McIntoshes, the Northern spies...and host of fine apple varieties that are uncommonly seen on your grocer's counters. You may find orchardists...and there are some good ones

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DEMCO

St. Joe Valley Reflections

Enclosed articles written by
Hubert Stackhouse

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How, 'n Why I Picked 'em

Each of the selections in this work have been included because they... in some sense..relate to St. Joe and the St. Joe Valley. The work is a sort of "labor or love"...a tribute to the community that produced both of my parents and thereafter furnished me a place to work and enjoy..and friends to cherish. The double hamburger, chili, pie and coffee at the Fair (with the St. Joe Lions), is not just a meal...it's dining with friends! (Had I not become such a confirmed "city slicker" in the past 70 years, That is the Lions Club I would have most enjoyed joining.)

This work will be printed totally at the expense of the Festival; any profit from that printing will be exclusively theirs. May you enjoy it; may they profit by it!

DEDICATION

Let this work be dedicated to the
leading statesman I ever met in
the field of education,

Ralph Sechler.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St. Joe Valley Reflections is sponsored series intended to reflect on the history of DeKalb County that might have gone unnoticed or forgotten. It is written by H. Stackhouse with the collaboration of S. Ted Walters, retired. Artwork prepared by Brian Walker, DeKalb High School Commercial Art Class

ALL I SAID WAS.....

This business of being an "expert" is odd, to say the most (I never say anything the "least", you may have noted!) All I said was..... (Talking to Le Grande Journalistic Poo-bah of the Hicksville Tribune)..... **"Hain't God bin Good to Indianny!"** (certainly not very orginal). In re: the way our waterways flow in this area. For.....

Consider N. E. Indiana's penchant for "imported" disasters, flood-style. First, we have.....Fish Creek, "outletting" Hamilton Lake and recently in flood, flowing over into Ohio to join the **south-western flowing** St. Joe of the Maumee (as distinguished from St. Joseph of the Lake, flowing north-westerly, sorta through Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties and emptying into Lake Michigan). [Guess why they named South Bend "South Bend"] Well, then, the romantic old St. Joe flows as though headed for respectable end in the Wabash River system of Indiana...passing through such eminence as Newville (where my father nearly drowned in it, c. 1912, while working on a new bridge); Orange, scene of the Kinkaid Mill and the celebrated "dog-rescues-drowning-tot" vignette; on to St. Joe, where my mother and her father fished, c. 1905, in a CLEAN river; further on to Spencerville, one of the first settlements in the country; then through Leo and on-on-on to the Three Rivers Filtration Plant in Ft. Wayne. But, at Ft. Wayne, it commits a watery heresy; and , after joining with the **north-westerly flowing** St. Marys river to become the Mighty Maumee, **makes a nearly 180 degree reversal and FLOWS TOWARD LAKE ERIE!,** to eventually empty into the Atlantic Ocean, via the St. Lawrence River system.

Well, that was a bit useful in our pre-settlement days when a relatively brief portage allowed you to go from St. Lawrence system to the Wabash-Ohio-Mississippi system. The French...the fur traders, courier de bois, voyageurs, et al, dud use it so and coveted it in the 18th century.

And, waterways dictated the early development of the area. When Houlton entered upon the territory, he came up the St. Joe and Fish Creek to

the general area of Hamilton to found the first "settlement". When Spencerville and Orange and Auburn were founded, all were placed on "working water", locations suitable to water-powered mills. At Orange and Spencerville, banks were high enough to allow dams and mills races that kept danger of floods to a minimum...**but they must have had 'em from time to time..(but there were forests a-plenty and prairies to slow-down and "meter-off" heavy rainfalls).**

Auburn was a sad, expensive exception...eventually. Wesley Park could have found ground almost 15' higher, **one-half mile in any direction,** according to the late Mayor Jerry Oren. But, Wesley elected the working water, set the town in a swampy swale, and "bought" big dollar drainage problems for the town. The Mayor was quite pointed (!) in rejecting my proposal, made many years ago, to erect a statue to our town founder... and just for that reason.

Well, anyhow... so the St. Joe brings us water from Michigan and Ohio, and St. Mary's brings up water from Ohio, and they **do contribute** to flooding conditions in Ft. Wayne every spring or so. Oh, 'tis true... lots of the water comes from drainage in Indiana's NE corner; but none the less, much of those floods are run out-of-state.

Well.....when the fine young reporters from the Hicksville Tribune came knocking on my phone (and then my door), I **properly acknowledged** that I'm NOT, repeat, **NOT** an expert on waterways... just an observer. I rambled onward about the "gift of the glaciers", leaving us the beds of sand and gravel, that so aided early "infrastructuring" of the area. I rambled onward about early canal efforts in the general area...about such vignettes in Richter's celebrated 'Trees-Fields-Town" Trilogy, about Adams' Erie Canal-set works, and the Gronauer Lock problem of New Haven and Allen county.

And then the reporter toyed with calling me an "expert". Oh, no! I'd guess I'd guess I'm rather more a literary and geographical name-dropper! So there!

Future name dropping?

1. Calming on the St. Joe River
2. Thar' She Flows!, (on Dredging Cedar Creek--already in print)
3. A Quaint, Ecumenical Vignette of the Flood of '83

ME 'n the PICKLE FACTORY

I suppose it would be natural to wonder what I, a bonafide city slicker, was doing at a Pickle Festival. Well, stand by! I'm a-gonna tell you, whether you want to know or not!

1. My family was sort of St. Joe, born and bred. My mother was born there, one true mile north of this spot..now the Betty Bevington home. There she lived when she was courted by my father, a sort of "outlandish" type from CR 60 and the State Line. When they married in 1914, they set up housekeeping...for a moment, on the corner of SR1 and Schoolhouse Street. There, a respectable year later, my sister Eunice would be born.
2. The happiest days of my teaching career were spent in St. Joe. From '51 to '58 (with one year out for a stint at Leo), I taught at Concord Township, then Concord-Spencer, and then Riverdale Schools.
3. I have labored, albeit of brief duration, in the "pickle patch". In the fall of '53, a remarkably early frost was anticipated. All seniors in Concord-Spencer were let out of class on Thursday before Labor Day; all juniors on Friday...to pick the crops, lest Sechler's suffer a wipeout of their supplies. Aunt Ida Reed and I, both sponsors of the Junior class, worked in the fields with the kids, picking them there peppers! Yes!

   It was two years later that I returned from Leo to teach under the benign leadership of the late, great Ralph Sehler. His name had been a household word with my mother, remembering him from her childhood as she did... except that she pronounced the "Sig-lerr". Ralph was the single finest statesman I knew in the 34 years of teaching...even to the point of raising his own taxes to support education. I think the community generally knew what a fine man they had in him, but it deserves saying again, **"There was a man!"**

I came to know his son, Franklin, better in later years, and he kindly recommended me for a university teaching position, once. I did not take it, but I still remember the confidence and kindness.

I am a devotee of Dekalb County rural roads, and for years, friends and I would motor over them simply for the pleasure of it. And "No," the potholes didn't bother me. After all, I had helped to build them in the great "black-topping decade", the 1950's. Anytime we were in the St. Joe area during business hours, a stop at Sechler's was indicated. I have permanent weakness for orange strip pickles, the coarsely-cut salad pickles, a raspberry Melba sauce they used to stock, and dills. And, I can still recall the amazement I felt when Ralph once told me of the quantity of dill chips they regularly provided of the legendary Gardner's Drive-in in Ft. Wayne...truly Olympian quantities! And, my idea of industrial efficiency is still the method they use to slice those dills into chips.

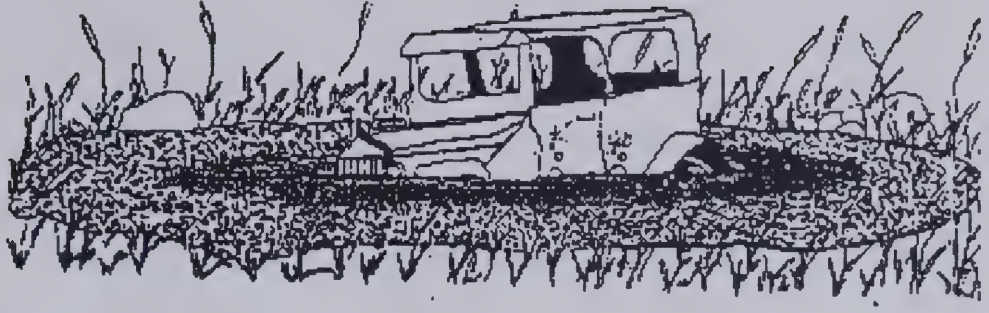
I never had the experience of working in the factory..rather unlikely for a teacher, but I treasured a situation that occurred there in the mid-'50's, anyhow. New coach in town. He's not giving much playing time to a pair of recognized (by their mothers) athletes on the team. The mothers work on a production line at Sechler's, and they daily flay the coach, verbally. As the season advanced, the situation got no better for their sons. It is questionable whether they ever stopped assailing the coach long enough to ask the name of an unknown fellow worker. She was the new coach's wife!

A final connection with the pickle factory? They seemingly have accomplished what my employers...the public schools...could not. There was once, you see, in my classes a young man who was, to put it politely, rather totally disenchanted with education, and especially with English. It isn't that he hadn't been exposed to it enough...I believe he took my course of sophomore English two

years in a row! But...as the saying goes..."Even if his soul were very, very dry, English wasn't going to set it on fire!"

But, perhaps 10 or 15 years passed, and "Voila!" He makes the papers with the fact that he has created a new specialty for Sechler's. Given the direction in which I assumed he was heading, it's a delight of note that he reversed his course and is making something admirable of himself. As I inferred, you cannot credit it to schooling or English...but I'm pleased to see him making his mark...and enjoying it, I sincerely hope.

And so, for this and a host of other reasons...including many friendships among St. Joe-type people...I feel right at home in Pickle Days.



Swamp with a Heart of Gold

Auto buffs, take notice! There are four or five Auburn auto chassis and motors, probably in near-mint condition, waiting for some adventurous soul (with lots of money) to recover them. They lie perhaps 35-50 feet deep in "the Great Tamarack Bog" on CR 59 about two miles north of St. Joe.

In the 1912-1913 period, an attempt was being made to fill-in a stable roadbed through the swamp. The author's father, along with a host of other drayers, hauled wagonload after wagonload of fill material and dumped it along the roadbed. Their efforts were only temporarily successful, inasmuch as torrential rains every few years put the entire area under water and destabilized their construction.

In that fateful summer, such a rain had put the roadway underwater, creating a perilous situation for anyone foolhardy enough to transit the area. Into this situation came a procession of Auburn autos, out on a test run. As mentioned, they consisted of only chassis and motor, with the minimal seating for the driver. The procession came over the Wabash railroad to the north and down the hill into the flooded area. It attempted the passage, unsuccessfully. Four or five of the vehicles slewed off the narrow roadway into the bog before the folly became fully evident. As they began sinking, their drivers scrambled to safety and watched their "steeds" sink slowly from sight.

Area farmers quickly turned out as the news was spread and attempted to help recover anything not completely gone from sight. Miss Harriet Oberlin, a retired educator now living in Orangeville, recalls that her

father nearly lost his fine team of horses as they unsuccessfully tried to extricate one of the Auburns-to-be from the mire--all to no avail, sadly. Swamps do a good job of preservation, being so oxygen poor that normal chemical and bacterial change are hindered. It may therefore be reasoned that the automotive treasure trove is still there, waiting. But, if you chose to inspect the area today, beware doing so after a summer torrent. A young driver, within the past 10 years, had an experience similar to the Auburns'.

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CLAMMING on the OLD ST. JOE

"And it came to pass that he was invited to speak at the St. Joe-Spencerville Lions Club's Ladies Night, and he sought to tailor [pun intended) his program to their particular community; and Lo, he remembered a news article he had read in his boyhood. Said article was of the death of a "clammer" on the spring-flooded St. Joe River. He knew that clamshell had been used to make shirt buttons in the earlier part of this century, and he thought to resurrect local knowledge of the practice. But, where to find a reliable source of information?

A Fortuitous Fate had cast him among the cardiac re-hab squad of DeKalb Memorial Hospital, and while plodding his way to nowhere on a treadmill, he made the acquaintance of one Mr. Estill Taylor, onetime resident of St. Joe (and President of its Town Board). Memory does not now served me as to how the conversation began, but Mr. Taylor was tailor-made (pun again!) for the project. **He and his father had clammed on a river in the general area....the Maumee...and surely the technique they used would have been universal to the trade! Fortuitous, indeed!**

Here follow Estill's invaluable memories, for which I offer my thanks...as did the folks of the St. Joe LC that evening. (Indeed, there was in the audience one lady whose father was one of the very persons mentioned by Estill as buyers of the harvested clamshell!)

It is probable that clams...not given to very rapid or extensive locomotion...would become subtly different from major stream to stream. Estill commented that shell from the Maumee was more highly valued than that of the St. Joe. But, the clamming technique had to have been much the same in the many "mid-western" streams.

You needed some sort of "sighting" device. In Estill's case, it was a cylinder of corrugated metal...or could have been any water tight cylinder. If corrugated metal, you could have sealed the sides of it with battery wax. just

as you had sealed the Ford automobile windshield that served as the "viewing plate" on its bottom. It was our equivalent of the glass-bottomed bucket favored by sponge divers in tropical waters, I guess.

Buoyant is what it was, being 3-4' long and air-filled. Of course, you did not submerse it totally in the water, but rather weighted it very extensively (Estill used old window sash weights.) so that it rode deeply in the water. Then, wading upstream in 3-4-5' water, you scanned the bottom for open clam shells. To further aid in the handling of the viewing cylinder, it was fitted with shoulder straps and handholds...but still, was likely awkward at first to use.

When? Well, given water temperatures and your prolonged exposure. you waited until some of the spring chill was off the water. Then, with permission of adjoining farmers, you crossed their land with your equipment (including a "scow" to tow behind you in the water, a "catcher" rod, gunny sacks, matches.) The farmers were rather cooperative, inasmuch as you wanted the shell, but their hogs could feast and fatten on the clam carcasses.

Into the water went Estill and his father, towing the scow behind them. Gazing then through their submerged viewport, they spotted their clams, thrust a metal rod into their opened shell, saw it gripped tightly by the clam, lifted the clam from the water and knocked it off in the scow behind then.

How many clams a day)...a week? In a good week, they could harvest perhaps 1,000 pounds of shell. To rid those shells of their residents, they would, at day's end (or whenever), dig a trench, build a fire in it, pull the metal-bottomed scow (loaded with clams, hopefully) over the fire, add a couple of gallons of water, and cover it all with the wet gunny sacks. They resultant steaming did the final number on the clams. after which they could be cleaned out of the shell (for the hogs' benefit). The shell would be loaded into the gunny sacks, and after a suitable period of collecting, would be sold to buyers in St. Joe.. Spencerville, New Haven, and other riverside locations.

In St. Joe specifically, a Mr. Bice was a purchaser; and in the presentation of this article. I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Imogene Hudson. whose father had been a buyer in Spencerville.

A provocative question: What of the fresh-water pearls (which could have a very interesting value)? Well, said Estill, "You learned to recognize the specific clam likely to produce such a pearl, and those you DID NOT subject to the steam bath." It tended to ruin the value of the pearl, which is, after all, an organic creation. Instead, those shells were "shucked" by hand. And, a profitable business it was, too, for at least one clammer. He was reputed to have found, and then sold to a Ft. Wayne jeweler, a pearl of **several hundred dollars** yield to him.

But, mostly, the shell. A good ton of shell sold for $15-20 in the mid 30's, but had risen several times higher than that by the end of the decade. It made a lucrative sideline for farmers who could spare the time, but it did come in demanding time for the farmer of that age. For whatever reason, Estill and his father did not clam into the 40's and probably no one clams now... except for the pig-toe mussel in the Deep south, perhaps yet in demand by Japanese culture pearl farmers.

I've been known to think with my stomach, and so I asked Estill about eating the clams.. Well, a clam is a filter feeder, and while the streams remained clean and relatively uncontaminated...well, you still took your chances. Estill told of a camp of migrant workers who partook of river clams, closely followed by last rites for several of them! He also recounted the great fish-water life kill that resulted when a sugar beet processing plant in Decatur area dumped it beet waste into the river. The pulpy residue simple smothered all water life on the St. Mary's and the Maumee. Estill is a dedicated sportsman, and he told with regret of seeing the fine and very large fish of the Maumee flopping, asphyxiated by trash coating their gills...dying on the river banks. It is likely that the Maumee never recovered

as a good fishing stream...certainly not to the bounty of bass and wall-eye (one of which Estill caught in trophy size).

So.....sometime, take a very old garment (that has been hanging in the back of the closet for 40 years!), and examine the buttons. If the back is slightly discolored (brownish), it is because it was cut from too-thin shell. But, it confirms the old-time practice of clamming...clamming on the Maumee...clamming on the Old St. Joe!

ACROSS ROAD 56
or...THE APPLES of THEIR EYES

There, across from where my Mama was born and played as a child... across from the scene of the celebrated "pig-sty" incident...lay on of the landmarks of the Concord Township..the celebrated, NEAR MILE LONG expanse of Leichty-Widney Orchards, running from "Dick Crow's Corner" to the "Pickle Factory Corner"! I personal never saw them in anything like their full splendor..Oh, my mother and I did visit the Leichty end of the operation once for apples, and a time or two after that when its buildings housed a slaughter house and meat market...but I never saw the full 4,000 feet of apple trees.

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But, there was the time when the entire county, and far more than that, drove to those orchards in the autumn to sample and buy the Grimes goldens, the Stayman's winsaps, the pippins, the McIntoshes, the Northern spies...and host of fine apple varieties that are uncommonly seen on your grocer's counters. You may find orchardists...and there are some good ones not too far from this spot..who can talk the old time varieties and sell you some of the fruits of the modern genetecists...but it won't be quite like it was then. And, you will likely not take anything home in the multiple bushels you once did, to be inured in your fruit cellar against the demands of February appetites. Most of you would have a rather hard time in telling where a single detached fruit -and-root storage building could now be found...I know of only one, myself.

And, in closing, most of you would be as mystified and horrified as was the legendary Hattie Widney when she hired her over grown orchard pruned early one spring, that in might return to better production. Hattie apparently had not paid enough attention to her husband's husbandry of the orchard...

did not realize that pruning an apple tree...especially an overgrown tree...would look to the unititated like arboreal slaughter. The gentleman who did the pruning described to me the veritable mountain of trimmings that came off her trees, and Hattie's chargin/objection/flare of temper when she saw the slaughter of her trees.

Said gentleman/trimmer did not say what the total result was, but I should guess, knowing his general expertise, that the orchard yielded again. Since that time, the redoubtable Hattie has passed on. Perhaps 50 years ago, in fact...the orchards yielded to an easier agriculture, and the sole remnant...if it ever exists...is a fruit storage build into the side of the ground swale that still holds Hattie's lovely, old house, now the residence of Millie Hansen.

But once, a hundred years ago, it was all different! But then, what wasn't?

"COWED", COWED BY IT ALL!

Given half the chance, most of us will romanticize the past...gaze longingly at it with rose-colored glasses. It probably never was as rosy/charming/innocent as we tell of it; indeed, there's a horrible possibility...no, certainty...that future nostalgiacs will do the same with THIS time.

Recently, I found yet another example of how I had been doing just this. I had taken such a mundane chore as milking Old Bossy and sugar-coated it. How so?

A forward-looking young farmer...that is, a prominent young dairy farmer...asked me to contribute a piece to an agricultural series, being printed in the Evening Star. I write at the drop of a milk bucket (bit of farm-style whimsy there!), and so I spun off 2500 words on Farming, Circa 1910. "Mystical Communion with Farm Animals" was a part of it all. I seated the Farmer on his one-legged milking stool (aka "Purdue lab stool"), had him press his forehead into Bossy's sleek -and-hairy side, and had him drawing forth the "skim", 1%,2%,4%, (or if you fancy Jerseys), 6-7%! (Astute City Slicker that I am, I still am amazed that Bossy can so easily decide which of those "strengths" of butterfat she is going to 'issue"...but that's a concern for a later date!) [But, I digress...a totally rare experience for me!]

So Young Hiram/Farmer Brown/David Harum...whoever (!)..poises on the stool, grasps the vital apparati, gently squeezes and tugs, from time to time aiming a white streak of nourishment at the barn cat..or the feet of any nearby City Slicker! **And, for Communion bit, he keeps his forehead pressed to Bossy's side...sort of like Mr. Spock doing a "mind-meld" bit on Startrek. Communion, Hell!**

"YOUNG HIRAM'S 'EARLY WARNING SYSTEM"

When I tried to run this bit of romanticizing past my young dairy farmer, he (politely, but **clearly,** nonetheless) informed me that it had rather a more practical side. "Goodbye" Romance; "Hello" Farm Practicality. It would seem

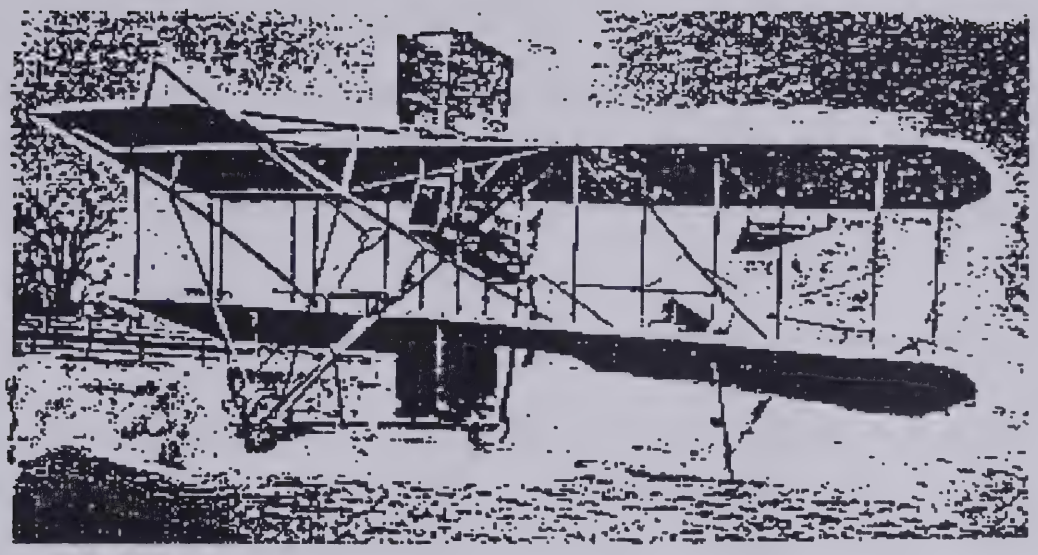
that not all Bossies are models of warmth and decorum! They ****KICK***THEY DO***!** So.....If you want to know when bossy is preparing some of her fancier barnyard ballet footwork, you keep you head in contact with her. **She "telegraphs" her moves; she cannot kick without signaling it by tensing of her muscled, and THAT you can feel.** So, fore(head) warned, you just lean back out of the way, taking the bucket with you!

Of course, I suppose that many farmers have learned the above through coarse experience...literally crying (out) over spilled milk. (For further whimsical reflection on this subject, corner some humorist and have him tell you the elaborate joke about "The Oklahoma Quaker and the Cow" (Yes, I know that you'd think that a Quaker should have an Eastern-Pennsylvania accent, but it's funnier to hear "thaaooow" and "caaoow", Tulsa-style! [In telling the fore (head) going joke, be sure to have checked out whether there are any Methodists in your audience, and make **VERY SURE** that they have a sense of humor!]

Casual questions for the above topic:

1. Do they feed poorer feeds...poorer pastures...to Bossy to enable her to produce the skim milk?
2. What-ever can they feed Her to produce non-fat dried milk?
3. If Bossy stepped-on and scraped your kid's foot, would you:
   A. Suspend all operations and call for the EMS
   B. Call your lawyer and sue yourself
   C. Apply fresh cow manure to it, and go on milking!

   (And, dear reader, have you ever got a surprise coming here!)



Art Smith Land in Auburn

Saturday, October 10, 1912--an overcast, unpromising day, was none-the-less the great day when Art smith, the Ft. Wayne "Bird Boy", would make his announced flying exhibition in and over Auburn. Ticket (25 cents) had been printed (courtesy two political candidates and the Victor Joe Cigar Co., owned by his lifelong friend and mechanic, Al Wertman of Auburn).

Art, flying a Curtis-type, pusher bi-plane, would attempt the hair-raising feat of landing it on Auburn Baseball field (just across Cedar Creek from today's Renaissance Corp. building on Seventh Street). At the appointed hour, the plane appeared overhead, executed its breath-taking loop-the-loops, and incredibly-settled onto the field.

Two very young men were present who may still tell of the occasion: Willard Maxwell and Ted Walters. Willard's father had taken him--a 6 year old boy--to see the exhibition, and it is he who remembers the weather causing two unsuccessful attempts to get back into the air before a final success.

Young Ted, our collaborator, managed to talk his mother out of the necessary admission fee, ran from his home (just east of DeKalb Memorial Hospital), paid his admission, and went inside the board fenced baseball field to TOUCH the plane. Says Ted, "I would have died if I hadn't been able to touch that plane!" The greatest wonder of it all is the landing and take-off

from that postage stamp. Given its broad wings and superior airflow of a pusher engine, it is still staggering to consider, here 78 years later.

Look the site over the next time you pass it, and see if you don't agree.

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In **HARVEY HULL'S ATTIC**

After you've written a bit, you may become prey to the thought that you're doing something rather profound. You hear a few nice things said about your writing, and you believe them...perhaps foolishly. You write more...and more...and more...until like me, you get 5 paperbacks in print.

After 5 paperbacks in print, encompassing more than 130 different subjects, you'd be reasonable to assume that my material might be running a bit thin. Not so. It has come to be that I need only sit still and the material seem to come to me. Thus it was with "Harvey Hull's Attic":

At a recent Lions Meeting in Auburn, PP Norman Gerig related to me a conversation he had sometime recently held with Parlie Hull, the widow of longtime Legionnaire Harvey Hull. Now, I had known Harvey, having first met him when I came to St. Joe to teach in 1951. I was myself then a Legion member, but it struck me a bit unusual that a town of St. Joe's size could support as post. What I didn't immediately realize was that it was the likely result of the enthusiasm of one member, Harvey Hull. To be sure, the bright red thread of patriotism was well woven into Harvey's nature..as was evidenced by his service in WWI, his careful tending of the veteran's graves in Riverside Cemetery..and likely other locations as well..and in the operation of the St. Joe Post of the American Legion. Now, to be sure, St. Joe has a lot of endearing qualities...or at least it did to my Mother, and she passed some of the liking on to me..but a metropolis it is not. So, a Legion post in a town of that size ...exceptional.

Parlie related to Norm that Harvey not only loved his country..he was a collector of memorabilia related to his service. Harvey had kept most of the government issue of his own experience, and he actively collected other items related to that, the most significant period of his life. And, as the years passed, the collection grew and grew.

As Parlie related it, she could not have it scattered indiscriminately about their home. She insisted that it be stored in the attic. First, the entire left side of the attic was filled...then the right...with only a path left open between. And then, rather naturally, the aisle was filled back to the door,

leaving just enough room to enter and stand looking at perhaps 50-60 years of accumulation.

Eventually, mortality caught up with Harvey, and he too became one of the residents of Riverside, awaiting Judgement Day. Eventually, Parlie was forced to give up her home. A grand auction sale was arranged, and GRAND it was! I would have had very mixed feelings, had I been the one that had to put the property in condition for sale. What a treasure lay in that attic! But what a monstrous job to prepare it for auction. Someone did, of course; but not swiftly. Days and days? Possible weeks and weeks!

In any case, the auction was held. As Lion Gerig re-told the tale, Parlie was properly awed by the bottom line of it all...**Harvey's Attic of Memorabilia had brought more at auction than everything else combined!**

From the bit of Harvey that I knew in the 50's...I am of the opinion that Harvey would have been pleased at the public's appreciation. Oh, to be sure, he would probably have liked to see it all kept together and displayed in a museum...but there would have been some solace in knowing it to be in the hands of those who could cherish it, if to a lesser degree, as he did.

As a final sentimental gesture, let those who appreciated Harvey's collection of proud souvenirs repair to Riverside on Memorial Day or Armistice Day and salute our departed patriot.

BURT and the GOLDFISH

Some fortunate men are seized, early in their lives, with an inspiration...a goal...that never again relinquishes its hold on them. It may just have been that way with Burtis Dickman. Some unkind wag might cattily observe that "Burt" has water on the brain," the result of that fixation. You'd not likely find Burt wasting much time worrying about such critics. He has tended to be genial and generous of nature, and with the likely weakness of thinking others about him are as he.

But the water? Burt was "spawned" not too far from the St. Joe and its necklace of gravel pits. They were a natural attraction, in his youth, as now. He was also, as a youth...(and probably now)..endowed with a Rube Goldberg-like knack for invention. Significant difference: Burt's "invention" worked, to a surprising degree. Cases in point:

'1. As a teen-ager, Burt designed for himself a driving helmet. Pictures of it, viewed nearly a half-century later, give cause to belated concern. It was fashioned of a lard-can-like cylinder with a glassed-over faceplate. It fit to the shoulders with padding, and was "counter-buoyancied" by very heavy weights. "You didn't dare lean over in it,"...in or out of the water. (On land, you'd lose it; in the water, it would fill will water instantly.) Air?...a worthwhile feature! A substantial flask of pressurized air, connected by an inordinate length of windshield-washer hose, supplied this. Unless, that is, you had friends who knocked the connections loose (as they did JUST ONCE!). The helmet quickly filled with water, and with the attached massive weights, Burt had a problem. I leave him to explain the extrication.

"Build a better mousetrap....." And the News Sentinel will send out a reporter to pix and facts, and spin them into a rather presentable article...heady stuff for a teen-ager. It's all contained in some worn, yellowed clippings that Burt treasures...as would we all(if we could ever make the Sentinel's pages!)

there is that understandable oddity about Middle-American boys: that they long to see the sea...(They very substantially enlist in the Navy.) Thus did Burt, following his graduation from Concord Twp. High School (St. Joe) in 1950. What, I ask you, what else for Burt but the submarine service?

Young, slim, handsome...a girl in every port? Not for Burt. He had shown the good sense to marry Elsie Baughman, a high school sweetheart, prior to his departure. (The author entered the tale not too long after, as he tutored Elsie in a Government course the last semester of '51-52,) Weak student? Not Elsie. She had sufficient credits to graduate, but needed the Government to complete state requirements. She took only that single course her final semester. She has shown her qualities and education for nearly 40 years now, capably assisting (some suspect, managing), in Burt's commercial interests. And, she produced five good looking, capable "models of her own.

Burt served on the USS Pollywog...whatever..the requisite time, and then, further influenced by his exposure/immersion...returned to home and hearth...mobil home and electric hearth, I should suspect.

I next picked up knowledge of Burt and Elsie as they became proprietors of the Southedge Mobil Home Court, just beyond the B&O/C&O/whatever...tracks on old 427 south. They lived and enlarged their brood in a remarkably efficient arrangement; a large apartment atop the laundromat.Heat..water..electricity. LAUNDRY FACILITIES...in the building or right downstairs. No dummies, they! I can recall Burt proudly showing off his laundry facilities, including a high-speed water extractor (for after rinse, don't' you know?) It could turn out clothes VERY NEARLY dry, it had spun so violently.

I recall, also that Burt took seriously the atomic scares of that era, and excavated the massively-cemented a bomb shelter in the middle of his mobil home court. I've been in it, and IT IS impressive...if a bit claustrophobia-inducing. (In this kinder, gentler era...a storm shelter par excellence!)

About this time...the late 50's...the news event (area-wise) of Burt's life...the Goldfish.

I don't honestly (or otherwise) know if the Goldfish was named first and then painted its spectacular yellow hue, or painted then named for obvious ...or even as the spooky precursor of the Beetles "Yellow Submarine". Consult Burt for that!

But, I do know what the charmer looked like...I have been in its presence-BUT NOT IN ITS INTERIOR! I will take many things on faith...well, FEW things...or maybe not much at all...but I passed on Burt's offer to go submarning with him on Pleasant Lake. Well, lots of people had more foresight and courage than I...celebrities like Herb Shriner, fer' instants'. I am slightly claustrophobic, as mentioned before, and DEFINITELY ALLERGIC TO DROWNING! I was raised to expect...(indeed, even be disappointed in its lack) disaster. And to be frank, I wasn't about to take a chance on a home-made submarine. If ever I get on one of them there suckers (HIGHLY PROBLEMATIC), it's a-gonna' be 'store-bought"!

The schematics, now contained in an impressive, very thick **volume, Manned Submarines,** Office of the U. S. Navy Oceanographer, 764 fact-and-photo-filled pages (and in your friendly local library, I believe)...well, they indicate a well-engineered, early, potentially-deep-sea submersible. That was the potential Burt saw for it as he designed it.

It would, given a break or two, possible have launched Burt on a fortune. Marine insurance of that age was shakey and subject to expensive fraud: when a ship at sea, insurers simply had to decide the honesty of claims **without concrete evidence!** Burt designed a prototype of deep-diving "photo platform" that could descend to wrecks, take evidentiary photos, (a feat now done by robots) and possibly relieve insurers of a **BILLION DOLLAR FRAUD** potential. But...it would take resources beyond a starting young businessman's to produce something that could challenge more than the depths of Ball and Pleasant Lakes...two of his venues.

Burt carried his grand idea to the Lincoln Life in Ft. Wayne, suggesting that in exchange for a half-million for development they could collar the marine insurance field. Well, maybe Old Abe had vision, but Lincoln Life didn't.

Lacking deep-sea dough, Burt's Goldfish remained for a time a curiosity and impressive technological toy...but it never got off the ground, as it were. It was book for community events, even to the Ohio River.

Burt's interests were varied; he was on his way to becoming a mobil home baron; he was developing Auburn's west side (following a coup at the expense of the local power structure); he and Elsie were founding the "dynasty". For whatever reason, Goldfish eventually "went into drydock", and the dream was deferred, postponed, and eventually abandoned with regret. But, give Burt a chance to detail the dream for you...really! Burt is nothing, if not optimistic of outlook. He has the engaging habit of looking you in the eye. Given that approach and his famous-favorite subject...and you could believe!

After, all he DID make the pages of the Sentinel!

One tangential, lingering question:

Jack Sanders, a Navy flier, served 8 years as Auburn's mayor. Burtis Dickman, a Navy submariner, served 8 years as Auburn's mayor, In the air...under the sea...aren't there any of them that just stay on the surface?

And, incidentally...neither of them ever traded on his military record (commendable in both cases) to gain votes.

NANCY and the CHARLOTTE RUSSSE

I should begin this evening by remarking on the pleasure it gives me to speak...or read to an audience with familiar faces. It IS comforting to know that several people here know what to expect of me...and they came anyhow. One of you, in particular, has been an enjoyable acquaintance on mine for more than 40 years now, and I think that the rest of you might just enjoy a couple of early "brushes" I had with this young lady. Oh...I know...if you add 40 years to whatever age she had when I first met, her, it adds up to something impressive. But, to a former teacher, there will always be something fondly remembered of....of....the spring of 1957.

The dramatic fortunes of Riverdale High School had been entrusted to me. I had ranged over the talent for prospective fall production, and I had thereafter tailored my choice to two or three potential actors. I had a boy of tremendous vocal capacity...no problem, then, to find a "Father" for my play. I had a girl of a sort of crystalline charm, a girl who had rescued the spring production when she moved from prompter to lead after the previous lead came down with mono. And, I had an energetic 8th grader on the horizon who could convincingly, I knew carry off the part of an 11-year-old tomboy... namely, one Nancy Brown.

So, Maureen Daly's SEVENTEENTH SUMMER it would be for us.

Summer came and went. Autumn arrived, and with it a challenge. Nature had taken its course with Nancy, and she was no longer diminutive or slight. She now topped my leading actress by a couple of inched, seemingly. And she was no longer shaped like your average 11-year-old! But, talent is talent, and ingenuity in ingenuity. Father was predictably sound. My lead actress was fully worthy of carrying the dramatic loan. And, Brown was a sensation. We "pig-tailed" her hair; we "sweat-shirted" her "more-than-11-year-old" figure; she mad a live-wire Kitty. The play succeeded very well; the cast received the compliment of tears from at least one deeply moved

audience member. And I? I copped a tie pin and a pair of cuff links that I treasure to this very day.

And then came "Nancy and the Charlotte Russe". I had read, been impressed by, and passed on to my classes parts of Samuel Hopkins Adams' GRANDFATHER DAYS, a memoir of growing up in Rochester, NY, in the 1880's. I particularly enjoyed the incident of the Charlotte Russe. I told it to a class containing Nancy, and didn't that child just make one at home! I would guess that I expressed doubt about anyone knowing what it could have looked like.....or anyone being able to prepare one. The challenge must been irresistible, and she did it! The only match I have ever had to that performance was when the daughter of Dr. Coleman, on hearing of the Biblical "soul food" called frumenty, DID actually make some and bring it to me at school.

Nancy, it turned out, could cook simpler vein, also. We were doing a scrap drive during her freshman year. During the lunch period, Nancy stopped at her home and prepared a simple dessert item that I have only seen in Asiatic Indian restaurants. You prepare a thin batter and drizzle it in a careful spiral into hot oil. I still don't know how you can turn such a "construction" over to cook the other side of it; but you do drain it on paper toweling and drizzle it with simple syrup or honey, and you can sprinkle it with cinnamon thereafter...sort of like Greeks do with those delicious mini cannonballs.

Other than Nancy's gustatory triumphs, there is little I could give you of Riverdale origin, except for our recipe for burnt chili...done rather accidentally in 1951, and not truly appreciated by our clientele. Oh, to be sure, they DO know how to cook down there: Councilman Wilder's "Tallyho" style prime rib; the Clayton Baker family apple butter recipe, and the St. Joe Hotel meatloaf, circa 1912. And, this past summer, they held a pickle bake-off...which just sorta blows the mind, doesn't it?

"SEVENTEENTH SUMMER" TIMES FOUR

In a lovely, by-gone era when I was accumulating "num-nums" for my old age (teaching and contributing toward my pension fund), one of my duties (from 1949 to 1962, at least) was to direct the class play. I have already confessed, in previous works ("The Little Rude Schoolhouse"), to my inadequacies at this assignment...and they were manifold! Fortunately, I was largely ignorant...as were all of the administrators who made such assignments...to the real qualifications of a, play director. So, adventurously/buoyantly/ignorantly I charged forth to lead my juvenile Thespians...or whatever

The play with which I had the most fun (or did the most damage, according to my critics) was Maureen Daly's "Seventeenth Summer". Mrs. Daly had, as an actual 17-year-old, written this seemingly-shallow, certainly-sentimental tale of that summer in the life of a sheltered young lady. It was very popular with the high school girls of that age, telling as it did of first love in conflict with reality. The heroine, Angie, had been educated in a private school (an experience then unknown to us), was preparing for college in the fall, and had stuck up a summer romance with handsome Jack, the delivery boy. Would she give up her plans for college to stay home in the little Wisconsin town, inasmuch as he could not afford to go to college with her?

Angle's family was pure "Father-Knows-Best" quality. Mature, settled, happy oldest sister, Margaret; unhappy, borderline neurotic next oldest sister, Loranine; and semi-bratty, tomboyish younger sister, Kitty. Father and Mother: cut from cookie molds, with lots of sugar on top. Standard, soap-opera-friends--the catty Jane-with designs on Jack; Tony, the wolf comfortable, settled Art (engaged to oldest sister). And...lots of sentimental, home-style poetics in the prologues to each of the acts, and the epilogue.

Well, first time out of the barn–Leo High School, fall production, 1954. **TYPE CASTING!!!--without me ever realizing it!** The students who tried out perfectly fit the parts, the more so because most of them were really

acting themselves. The neurotic sister HAD been "in analysis"; the beautiful Angie had never had a date; Jack was the popular, all-American boy type [though of a family that certainly could have sent him to college].

We performed it on the grotesque new Leo High School stage; it was a fine production, in every opinion except the principal's. His comment, "We like our plays funny here at Leo!" (Well, for a spring production, I gave him "Hillbilly Courtship" with a set of sight gags that would have embarrassed Milton Berle!) But, the first "Summer" **was** good, even if a bit short on the snobbish "redeeming social merit". On rare occasions, now some 40 years later, I run into Art or Kitty (I later taught children of each of these in yet other schools)...and I remember them better for the play than anything else.

Performance #2...Riverdale, c. 1959. Nothing succeeds (and repeats) like success. This time mischance struck my cast early, with surprisingly results. I had picked the play in Spring, for production the following autumn...largely because I had a mint-quality Kitty (the 11year-old sister). Being the clever, adaptive All-American teacher (that I wish I were), I compensated with a very baggy sweatshirt and pigtail braids, along with lavishly applied freckles.

My Angie, a savior of the Spring play when she changed from promptress to lead (following a case of "mono" by my leading lady), carried it off beautifully. Beautifully! - even when Mother failed to give Kitty the proper exit cue and left her on-stage during Jack and Angle's "reconciliation scene" in the third act. Poor Kitty looked like she had egg on her face, but it was Mother's fault. Angie sensed the problem and manufactured stage action and dialogue that sent Kitty off, albeit on the wrong side of the stage. Poor Kitty had to pelt her way clear around the back of the school building to get to the proper side for her next entry on-stage! But...Mother did make scrumptious blueberry muffins for every rehearsal and for the performances, guaranteeing dramatic authenticity, at least!

And then I went to Garrett High School, for the last of my "Summers", c. 1959. I cringe yet! Oh, it was a fine play, with largely good memories and

good performances. It was me. Angie needed a piece of luggage for act III...her getting-ready-for-college scene. Sweet Susie Smith, my Angle, brought a new Samsonite suitcase, vinyl-sided. (There is a very worthwhile rule that you do not ever use new-ANYTHING as a prop in a play, damage being such a possibility. We ignored it, to Susie's sorrow.) I was making signs for the play, using a re-fillable, felt-tip pen. Somehow the oil-based ink splattered, and Susie's new suitcase was spotted prominently. Bad, bad, bad is how I felt...and so did Susie. There were about three times in my career when I felt that I had let my students down...would have given anything to undo the damage. That was one of them.

The play was a success again, with otherwise pleasant memories. Jack, for instance, had a speech impediment in everyday life that he totally overcame to give a fine performance. Mother had a magnificent corona of hair, which she dressed meticulously each day. One of the girls took it down during an "off-stage" moment for mother, and then unexpectedly I called for the "mother" scene. She came flying on stage, looking like Crystal Gale...That "Mother" did her exceptional (for a teen-ager) preparation for her role: She "stalked" the school's mature librarian for days, observing her "mature woman" walk, and then perfectly duplicating it on-stage. Not such a great feat in anyone's opinion?...Then try describing how an adult's walk differs from a teenager's! And, the School Board raised the next director's salary **at my request.** And I went out of the directing business.....And then I went to Waterloo, and talked my friend, Mary Evelyn Moore, into doing "Summer #4". (I handled the set construction, publicity, etc.....I think.)

Well, Angie was a very-gingery Ginger Haislip. Jack was a non-dewey Dewey Karnes. On Friday night (dress rehearsal), Dewey ate a green onion, deliberately, just before the "reconciliation/love scene" in Act III, the scene of ********the KISS!!!******* Ginger remarked about it when she came offstage. "Well, Ginger, if you want to try it, I think we can arrange for you to pay Dewey back," said the 295 pound mischief-maker. And so, it came to pass,

at the Saturday night performance, that Ginger chewed a clove of raw garlic just before the big scene. Her line was with **heavy aspiration,'OHHHHHHH, JACK !!!!!',** and she kissed him soundly. Reaction? As Jack exited the scene, he looked at **me(!),** and remarked **"YOU RAT!!!"** Discipline the boy for a disrespect to a teacher? Don't be dumb! I was delighted.

I returned to Garrett High School again, then to Eastside High School, and finally to DeKalb High School; and never ventured onto the stage again. But, the other day, I was looking through a box of personal jewelry, and there were a pair of beautiful cufflinks set with a row of red stones and engraved "Seventeenth Summer". Just let the Rockerfellers try to match that!

MISCELLANY: Kitty #2 grew up, graduated Riverdale and IU, and became a dominant force on the DeKalb Central School Board. She will never lose the dramatic flare she so charmingly displayed on the "boards" at Old St. Joe. (Nancy Brown Mc Nabb)

Father #2 became the most admirable politician I have ever met, and a fellow teacher. (Robert L. Wilder of Riverdale)

Jack #3 became a teacher for a time, but then launched himself successfully in the business world. (Garrett High School)

The neurotic sister, Lorraine #3. "used" me (took my course in Spanish, largely to secure a role in the play) and then dumped the course immediately after the play was history. (Garrett High School)

Mother #3 was the best organized student I have ever seen and had the extremely good taste to become a teacher of **exactly** the same subjects in which I had taught her! She was chosen the outstanding teacher of the Bloomington school system within a few years of her graduation from IU, 1964. And...could that girl do real justice on the piano to Leucona's "Malaguena"! Carramba! (Garrett High School)

I'LL BET YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME!

One of the lovely perils of teaching... and retiring thereafter....is to witnessed again this Saturday night at the Auburn Lions tent: the return of the student to the old teacher! I will be sitting low behind the counter, counting the incoming cash (a labor of love for me, you may be sure!) and my attention will be called to a stranger, standing at the counter. **"I'LL BET YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME!"**

Well, having just been concentrating on portraits of Lincoln, Hamilton, Jackson, Grant, and hopefully a Franklin once in a while...it may take me a moment or two to register on the present face. But, I should; for they are the faces of comfort from my past teaching. And, I can "make" their evening if I do remember them.

And what makes the student that I remember? I rarely forget a 6' tall red-headed, freckled girl...or any other exceptional physical type. I rarely forget dazzling scholars...the kind that made you so nervous because you fully knew they were smarter than you, and would in later life considerably outshine you. Disciplinary problems? Well, yes, you would remember them, but they rarely look you up in later life, anyhow...so, no problem.

The ones that give me the greatest joy, however, are the everyday, not-so-"run-of-the-mill" good citizens who settled here in the county, sent me their good children; served their families, churches, and civic groups well.. .. and then, paradoxically, when I would like them to call me by my given name, **still refer to me as "MR. STACKHOUSE" despite my happiness to now consider them a friend.** (I've never been fond of my given name, and I rarely encourage anyone younger than I to use it. But, these fine folks, to whom I would gladly give the right, will be calling me MISTER even at my funeral I suspect.

Have I failed to mention the weak student, and the student rebel? Well, now, 40 years after some of them demonstrated very limited interest in English grammar, I must honestly observe that they have done quite well with

their lives, grammar notwithstanding. And the rebels? I can still remember that they were rebelling, and what they were rebelling about...**but it seems rather pointless now, and not worth the trouble we made of it. I don't really know whether that demonstrates growth on my part, or a more mature judgement, or just senile boredom.**

But, the most delightful moment of each last-night- of-the-Fair evening is when, paradoxically, I do remember someone whom 40 ensuing years has not removed from my memory. Let me tell you, **"It more than makes their evening!"**

And those I cannot remember? I beg off, citing senility, or the changes that 20-30-40 years MUST have made in them. I can still light up their evening with a joke, sorta. "Gee, that must have been Scott/Concord/ Concord-Spencer/Leo/Riverdale/Garrett/Waterloo/Garrett/Eastside/ DeKalb... **"and you must be almost 30 years old by now!" This last remark is a PATENT FRAUD.** And they know it, and they know that I know that they know it, they enjoy it anyhow.

So, should you come by this Fair Week Saturday...or any future time and say to me, I'll bet you don't remember me!" I may have to fake it, but I'll try to remember you...or at least make it a warm moment for you.

RIVERDALE TALES-NEW
(prepared especially for Pickle Days, 1998)

Every school has its "untold tales", its "insider" stories...Riverdale Too. Of course, my Riverdale includes Concord Township School, as well as Concord-Spencer, Riverdale, and Eastside. Give me a sort of sweeping field, doesn't it?

1. The Principal and the Ice Cream account. We had a freezer chest, positioned just opposite the entrance door of the "new" high school building at St. Joe. It was the profit-making province of the junior class; and as such, the responsibility of the junior sponsor, me. It was, for obvious reasons, kept padlocked, and I presumed that I had the only necessary key. My St. Joe kids were honest, perhaps more so than some selected "embezzlers" I met at a later school! But, we could not get a reconciliation of ice cream sold with money taken in! Then, one afternoon, I remarked to the principal (a hungry balloon of a man, he!) that it was unfortunate that I did not have the key with me, for I would have treated him to an ice cream bar, **which I would have paid for!**) Dumb, he! "Hey, don't worry. **I've got a key!!!"** And he whipped it out, had an ice cream bar, DIDN'T OFFER TO PAY, and I knew then why the account would NEVER balance!...and him former minister, too!
2. A Lesson is Caution. One of the Concord Township students became the first speech therapist that I had ever taught, and I was proud of him. He was, in our area, an educational pioneer...and rather typical of the levels of achievement that students of our little school reached. Well, then, when he was available, I booked him to speak to the Garrett Classroom Teachers meeting. The audience was of all grades of the school, kindergarten to graduation. He began with one rather general statements...and not knowing that he had some powerhouse elementary teachers in the

group, offered the opinion that elementary teachers did not teach much (or effectively) reading. Now, this was a good kid; but **THAT** statement was stupid! Instantly, an immensely good teacher...with DEFINITE personality...arose and informed him...simply and directly...that he didn't know what he was taking about. (And, he didn't). He gathered himself up a bit, apologized for his gaff, and went on with an effective, if more cautious presentation. (He was able to give me some techniques to use to help a fine-but-stuttering student in my classes...a gift that that student has remained grateful for now these 40 years.

3. High kicks in the Ag. Room. Fund raisers at St. Joe were never very long on funds, but often fun. The chili might burn, but the camaraderie was good. Thus it was in about 1956 or 57, that we decided to put on some sort of stage show. I no longer have the organization of the timing in mind, except to note that there was a tap dancer, for whom we had to sand the floor of the stage. The floor was in treacherous condition..a peril to a dancer...and when we finished with the sanding, it seemed wafer thin. April didn't fall through, but there WAS a risk of it! And, some of the practices were held in the Ag. Rooms, basement of the old building. Painted cement floor, and just a bit glossy. Boisterous young teacher (me!). Demonstrating his flexibility (to Lehr and Bernice Wilder). Could kick high enough to hit a very low ceiling light...or so he thought. Tried it! Quickly ended up on the flat of his back, and a bit chagrined! **Didn't try it again!** And, in later year, I became a good friend to the Wilder family and son, Robert; but they could have had no illusions about my "gravitas" or "dignity quotient".
4. An Ill-fated Candy Sales. Another fund raiser--we issue about $40.00 worth of overpriced candy, and have student peddle it to a put-upon group of friends and family. One enterprising kid ate all of

the candy and refused to pay for it. A "nanby-pamby" principal ruled, "Well, it's their project (and even though this would reduce their profit margin considerably), **if he wants to do it...I don't see what we can do about it!"**

The "treasurer" of the project, chosen by me (because he was a good kid) turned out to be woefully short of bookkeeping skills, as was I short of supervisory know-how. But, it took me too long to discover this, and damage was done. He reported that a fine girl in the class had not paid for her candy (when in fact she had). The poor child paid again..a fact I much later recognized. I carried a feeling of guilt with me for 30 years after, and only within the past couple of years found a way to salve my conscience and perhaps modestly rectify the error. But, maybe Fate took a hand in it all. She had endured an emotionally bumpy childhood, I suspect. Fate gave her a fine lad for a husband, and I have the hope she reaped a good life.

5. "Stories Not Ready for Prime Time"
   A. The tyro teacher tries to talk ME out of a failing grade for one of his "atha=letes"!
   B. The Sunday-afternoon "Library Paste Festival"
   C. Miss "Cowgirl-USA" Cops a Week off for the Fair
   D. The Principal and the Wailin' Women Teachers
   E. "Fiat lux", **but Not Through the Study Hall Walls!**
   F. The Great 1954 Faculty Clean-out
   G. The Little Teacher Who Could...and the Pea-green Biddies Who Couldn't
   H. Cheap-oo Commuteers
   I. They Warm the Cockles of my Heart, "Florence Nightingale, "Smelby", Sammy, Mary B., and selected faculty members

ON CLASS REUNIONS

Several times a summer, retired teachers may expect to receive invitations to attend a reunion of the Class of 19XX. Attendance is provocative: Often, it will be at uncomfortable locations and uncomfortable distances at your own expense of both TIME and money. It will take a pretty warm set of memories to lure you out to that kind. Once in a while, the invitation will stipulate that "You will be our guest!", this will make it marginally more palatable...but chicken and green beans and buffet lines and repeated reminders that your memory (and perhaps your waistline or hairline) isn't what it used to be...well...tend to cause hesitation or gentle refusal altogether.

Exaggeration? Not really. I have my own Class's reunions (every 5 years) of both high school and college...and I watched 34 of my teaching classes graduate. They can add up.

But, when you attend, there's usually a feeling of an evening well-spent; even though it begins with a lot of "I'll bet you don't remember me's ! witness this summer's high moment: the Class of 1957 bash at the ACD Museum. A specific phone call was requested, that I might not..in September..forget the written invitation I had accepted in May. It came from the Class VP. Whose participation seemed to guarantee a lively evening.

Well, I didn't remember a distressing number of perfectly fine people...but I did remember some of them, and I showered them with my reminiscences of their pasts. With the tendency of the '57's to marry '56's or '58's, once in a while I got confused about the exact texture of the class...but, ALL is forgiven at one of these occasions.

A delightful bonus of this occasion was the presence of two of my fellow faculty members...dear souls that I hadn't seen in perhaps 30 years (and might normally have expected to NEVER see again)! Both appear to have prospered: both have retired: both shed additional light on our profession.

Miss BW, the business teacher. I was charmed by her admission that our school had been her first year. I've no memory of any "green-ness" on her part. She dealt with her first school and students like a true professional...even when confronted with the assignment of a yearbook sponsorship laid upon her in the usual fashion: "You teach English? You'll do the play!... "You teach typing? You'll do the yearbook!" [This is analogous to saying, "You have a pocket knife. You will do the brain surgery!"]

She was grace itself in thanking her yearbook staff for making her first venture a success...and for having helped her obtain further positions by mentioning her yearbook "experience record".

And Mrs. CP...45 years of pleasant memories unite us, for we taught again at a cross-county school in the late '50's. Her smile and her warmth have not deserted her, and she was accompanied by the same gentle, "short-haired" husband with whom she has shared a half-century of marriage. She was as young in spirit now, as was she that night in 1956 when I staged a temper tantrum (a cast control mechanism of mine) and scared not only the cast, but her also! (And until last night, I doubt that she ever realized that I DID stage the event!

Like most reunions, some who should have been there weren't...and likely for no really good reason. Sadly, serious health concerns would keep a few away. Sadly, some have paid the price of morality and will never come again. But, there were enough there to delight us.

When the event broke up at a discrete 9:30, we knew that we'd re-assemble again in 2002 for the 45th. They'll be 63...most of them. I'll be 78...most of me ! I hope they CAN call me in May...and remind me in September. I'll kid them again about their advancing waistlines and receding hairlines and Grecian formula...I'll risk those pictures of their grandkids...and maybe a few great-grandkids. Most of them will be retired by then, for some already talking of early retirements. And, "Yes,' I won't remember all of them...but I'll try..or fake it!

Details: You get a chance to review who made great marriages....who has repaired disastrous early marriages...who turned out as well as you expected...and who turned out a lot better than you expected!...and you know that they're all shrinking in height, but so are you and no one suddenly towers over you.

And Mercy! The "Iceberg" effect! I am sure that no teacher ever realizes how much goes on at all. Of course, students can never know the totality of teaching and administration. Once in a while, you have to think it's a miracle we even speak the same language. Joyously...if we sometimes didn't understand each other, **at least it didn't take a federal court or William Kunstler to interpret for us!** We had no battles over dress codes then: we did the Teen Canteen after games on Friday nights, generally without incident.

We sold magazines, and candy; and did concessions and had chili suppers and put on a class play to make a nickel and a dime for the class treasury...and we went to Ft. Wayne to have senior pictures taken: and it wasn't a federal crime not to have a class jacket/sweater/ring...and we lived and did rather well without a fieldhouse or a football stadium w/all-weather track. And, we survived..paid our taxes...raised our kids with some of the values we were taught. We could have done a lot worse.

Where Do The Trains Go Now?

It is one of those nights when sleep does not "lay its laden mace" on me--perhaps the legacy of an evening with Juan Valdez and his caffeine-toting burro--or perhaps too much stimulating event and championship--but sleep I do not. In the dark of my bedchamber and from a great distance, I hear a memory of days past--a lonely train whistle in the night and wonder, "Where do the trains go now?"

When I was a child, and on very rare nights when I did not the sleep of the innocent young, I would hear train whistles in the night. A celebrated author captured all of my reaction when she noted that she never heard a train whistle but that she would gladly go wherever it was going. I never quite located the "where" that they were going but I'd have gone too. Oh, I had played along the cinder-strewn tracks and knew such fragments of local geography as would give Hicksville in one direction and Garrett in the other, but beyond that--mystery! I could have known that eventually the tracks ran to Chicago and Omaha and San Francisco...or Bangor or Boston or Biloxi. I could have, indeed but all I cared or dared then to know was that the line ran from the curve toward Garrett to the floating climb toward towards St. Joe. And so, I lay abed, heard the mournful whistle and the faint-but-hypnotic clack of rails, and let the stream dragons disappear into romance and mystery and ignorance.

Now at 70, I hear lonely whistles again and feel a longing; but, is it to be that child again, or is it to know where the trains in the night go?

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